

# Former FAO and Other UN Staff Association



**FFOA/GA/2018/03**

## **PROVISIONAL REPORT**

### **Forty-seventh Session of the General Assembly**

Wednesday, 31 May 2017 – Italian Conference Room, IFAD Headquarters

**1. Opening of the Forty-seventh Session of the General Assembly**

The President of the FFOA, Mr Alan Prien, opened the Session at 9:45 hours, welcoming guests and participants and announcing that interpretation would be in two languages: English and Italian. He also announced that proceedings could be followed via Webcast for those unable to be present in Rome.

**2. Establishment of a quorum and announcement of the number of proxies declared valid**

Mr Prien announced that a quorum was achieved and that eight proxies had been received; thus all decisions would be binding, including on those members not present. He declared the meeting officially opened and constituted in accordance with the Articles of the Association.

**3. Nomination of Rapporteur, announcement of the Interpreters and the Photographer**

Mr Prien announced that Ms Mariam Ahmed would serve as Rapporteur for the Provisional Report of the General Assembly; Ms Marta Bochicchio and Ms Ennia Cucchiarelli would provide Italian and English interpretation; and Mr Alex Van Arkadie would be responsible for the photography.

**4. Election of the Presiding Officer of the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly**

Mr Sino Tesfamariam, former IFAD Credit Union Manager, was proposed to chair the Assembly. He was elected by acclamation and welcomed to the Chair by Mr Prien. Mr Tesfamariam said it was an honour and a pleasure to preside over the 47th Session of the General Assembly and extended a warm welcome to all members.

**5. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda (FFOA/GA/2017/02)**

As no proposals for changes were received before the deadline of 28 April 2017, the Provisional Agenda was adopted as presented.

**6. Address by Ms Lakshmi Menon, Associate Vice President, Corporate Services Division on behalf of the President of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)**

The Presiding Officer welcomed Ms Menon and thanked her for agreeing to address the meeting.

Ms Menon welcomed all members to IFAD noting that it was always a pleasure to host Rome-based agencies (RBA) colleagues and FFOA representatives in IFAD.

She stated that IFAD, FAO and WFP have a long lasting history of partnering in insurance and other benefits. Ms Menon added that IFAD is partnering with the RBAs on the joint tender of insurance plans.

Throughout this process, she assured the members that IFAD was committed to giving priority to the health and wellbeing of its staff including former staff, considered for IFAD as part of the family, and that more information on this would be provided in due time.

In relation to staff health and wellbeing, Ms Menon informed that Dr Hayford Etteh had joined IFAD in December 2016, as IFAD's Medical Advisor. Staff now had access to expert medical support every day of the week. She added that Doctor Etteh had extensive international experience as an occupational health specialist. His team was carrying out a survey regarding health risk assessment leading to an action plan which will fine tune initiatives planned for 2017 and define actions for 2018 to improve staff wellbeing at the workplace, with an emphasis on prevention.

Ms Menon also informed the meeting that after many years of invaluable dedication, hard work and commitment to IFAD's work, Ms Linda Orebi was retiring on 1 June 2017. Linda Orebi has been responsible for social services, including pensions, insurance and medical issues. She has played an active role as Secretary of IFAD's Staff Pension Committee and participated in the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund Board (UNJSPF) meetings. Ms Menon thanked Ms Orebi for her tireless commitment and for always being an example for all of corporate spirit and commitment to IFAD's values.

She also informed that with Ms Orebi's departure, Ms Candida Sansone would be taking on the role of Secretary of IFAD's Staff Pension Committee. Ms Sansone currently headed the HR Policy Unit and had been working within the UN Common System for 25 years.

The Presiding Officer thanked Ms Menon for her intervention and her commitment to the wellbeing of IFAD's staff. He expressed his appreciation for the close collaboration, demonstrated by IFAD Management for hosting this meeting, noting that the FFOA Executive Committee was fully prepared to assist and cooperate with IFAD, particularly regarding advice to staff members in service who plan to retire in the near future. The Presiding Officer also requested Ms Menon to convey the Assembly's congratulations to the IFAD President and extended the Association's best wishes in his mission for combatting the challenges of hunger and poverty.

**7. Statement by the Representative of the Staff Bodies of FAO, WFP and IFAD**

Mr Tesfamariam welcomed Ms Daniela Cuneo, President of the IFAD Staff Association, speaking on behalf of the AP-in-FAO, WFP-PSA, the IFAD Staff Association, IFAD-ECSA, and the UGSS.

Ms Cuneo noted that over the past years, FFOA and the Rome-based Staff Representative Bodies (SRB) have built a very solid partnership and a robust network. Despite limited time for adequate interaction - due to ever-rising workloads - FFOA, and the representatives of the Rome-based Staff Bodies had managed to nurture this solid partnership by creating the space to exchange views on issues that are relevant to staff in active service as well as retirees. Not only did the SRB highly value FFOA's advice and guidance on issues that related to regular working life, but also collaborated together in areas of mutual interest aimed for the common welfare of active and retired staff.

In referring to pension matters, Ms Cuneo extended a warm welcome to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the UNJSPF, Mr Sergio Arvizú. On behalf of the SRBs, she acknowledged his recent efforts to streamline the Fund's services to retired colleagues in cutting delays for payment of their first pension. However, she noted that there continued to be some inexplicable delays. She noted that RBAs relied on his lead help to regenerate membership confidence and fine-tune the Fund's services to ensure a transparent management of the Fund's resources. Ms Cuneo observed that given the current economic situation, no retiree would be financially "stable" to cope with inordinate and lengthy delays from non-receipt of her/his pension on the due date.

Ms Cuneo welcomed the representatives from Allianz and thanked them for their presence. She acknowledged that there was some staff frustration on the services provided by Allianz. She noted that while it was expected to receive the same services as those provided by Van Breda, unfortunately, this was not the case. She also noted that while delays in reimbursement had decreased, however, the criteria in force to reject claims remain unclear and has given rise to staff discontent. She expressed the hope that with the possible launch of a new tender, staff concerns would be appropriately addressed - more specifically toward the aged, the infirm and the "single" one.

Ms Cuneo noted that the international scenario in our race for achieving "Zero Hunger" was not promising either. Here again the financial crisis posed several challenges. At the same time, the ambitious goals of the Agenda 2030 and the largest humanitarian crisis since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 - with more than 20 million people in four countries at risk of starvation and famine - call for more continuous "tracking" on the part of our Administrations in formulating solutions to boost the impact of our work-output, but strictly within the mandatory requirement of a "zero growth budget". RBA employees and staff representatives well understood the complexity of the global panorama and the challenges that needed to be confronted by our Member States, as well as by our respective Administrations. However, she stressed that effectiveness and efficiency must not be achieved at the cost of disregarding basic principles such as fair and equal conditions for all RBA employees, irrespective of their culture, sexual orientation, geographical provenance or age.

In referring to the latter, Ms Cuneo noted that younger colleagues were often offered non-staff contracts. Ms Cuneo indicated that this issue was raised by FAO colleagues when addressing Member States during the 156<sup>th</sup> Session of the recent FAO Council. While there were no concrete data available on this matter, it was known that the phenomenon was prevalent in all RBAs. She underscored that this was unacceptable. Ms Cuneo stressed the need to offer youth - those upon whose

shoulders the future of our respective UN Agencies could grow - a secure and stable future. Ms Cuneo added that the increased number of non-staff contracts were alarming not only for its inevitable negative impact on the stability of the Pension Fund but even more so for these young people with no social security, no medical coverage, no annual leave, and when they are mature in age, no claim to a pension either. She questioned whether this was acceptable and whether the younger staff members were not entitled to have the same rights as their RBA colleagues.

Ms Cuneo referred to the issue of the implementation of the General Assembly decision to extend the Mandatory Age of Separation (MAS) to 65 years to all staff from 1 January 2018. Currently the new MAS is applied to all staff recruited after 1 January 2014 in FAO, IFAD and WFP. With respect to the possibility of raising the MAS to 65 years for staff serving before 1 January 2014 and wishing to remain in service beyond the age of 60 or 62, Ms Cuneo noted that FAO had not yet aligned with the implementation date of 1 January 2018, as recommended by the ICSC and the General Assembly. She indicated that WFP Management was now looking at the legal implications of implementing the GA recommendations vis-à-vis FAO Staff Regulations. She stated that as far as IFAD was concerned, in principle, IFAD had approved the application of the new MAS to all staff recruited before 2014 taking into account their acquired rights. This change would, however, need to be reviewed in the context of the staffing and financial resources planning process. Accordingly, the adoption of the MAS will take place no sooner than 1 January 2019. Ms Cuneo felt that conversation with Management needed to take place in the coming future to have more information on IFAD's final decision of when the new MAS will be offered to IFAD staff recruited before 1 January 2014.

Ms Cuneo also noted that currently, AP-in-FAO in collaboration with FICSA and CCISUA, were in the process of identifying test cases of UN staff who will be negatively and substantially affected financially by specific changes to the new compensation package. It was foreseen that some categories of such staff might find their total compensation - salary, plus benefits and allowances - significantly reduced. She noted that this was work in progress, and she looked forward to the results of this exercise.

Ms Cuneo noted that the blue UN flags that fly and flutter on our UN building should become a daily reminder and symbol of the values of the United Nations. It was neither ethically correct nor in conformity with the profound spirit of the UN to ignore Staff Representatives and exclude them from important "talks" that could adversely affect staff. She asked that reforms and changes be initiated in joint consultation with SRBs - not without them. It was often repeated that staff are the most precious asset of the RBAs. So why were staff representatives ignored when they could bring experience, advice and contribute to the overall morale of the UN Organization. She deplored the fact that lack for consultation was one of the main reasons for staff disengagement. Ms Cuneo appealed to all of UN Staff Associations to stay united in order to jointly ensure that our role in the UN was respected.

Ms Cuneo stated that staff management relations in IFAD had recently improved, and she was glad to learn from WFP colleagues that the consultation process in WFP was also a robust one. She regretted, however, that the situation in FAO is sadly far from "ideal". FAO's challenges were shared with the Member States on the occasion of the recent 156<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Council. As RBA staff representatives, Ms Cuneo sincerely hoped that Member States had listened to the FAO colleagues and



Rome-based UN Staff Representatives who attended the GA and joined FFOA members at the buffet lunch (from left to right): Ms Silvia Mariangeloni, General Secretary, UGSS; Mr Juan Coy, General Secretary, AP-in-FAO; Ms Daniela Cuneo, IFAD Staff Association Chair; Ms Sonia Leuzzi, Executive Secretary, UGSS.

would not ignore the need for re-establishing a true consultative process in line with basic UN principles. While the principle was respected that decisions are with the Management, she urged the RBA administrations to respect the principle that staff representatives must be consulted.

Ms Cuneo expressed disappointment and that of the FFOA in particular, on the unilateral decision of the FAO Administration to make changes to the composition of the Joint Advisory Committee on Medical Coverage (JAC/MC) - a key Committee in the review of technical aspects of After Service Medical Coverage - which would have a detrimental impact on all of us. She added that the changes foresee the elimination of all Staff Representative Bodies (IFAD, WFP, FAO and even our most competent senior partners of the FFOA) from the Committee in favour of the so-called “elected staff”. She stressed the need to re-establish a communication channel with FAO Administration to abide by FAO Statutory requirement for consultation and negotiation as provided in Article VIII on Staff Relations. After all, she noted that FAO’s Administration staff will themselves - one day, stand to gain from our joint contributions to the deliberations at the JAC/MC. She stressed that the UN Executives in particular should lead by example rather than taking advantage of their positions to impose decisions that by general consensus are regarded ‘irrational’. She reminded that we are all bound by a Common Pledge to respect the rules and principles on which the UN has been founded.

The Presiding Officer thanked Ms Cuneo for her remarks and reiterated the importance of collaboration with the Staff Associations, and exchanging views on subjects of common concern and interest. He indicated that the points made and issues raised by the Representative of the Staff Bodies would be of particular significance to subsequent speakers.



**8. Address by the Representative of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr Amir Abdulla, Deputy Executive Director**

Mr Abdulla thanked FFOA for the invitation and recalled that he had also addressed the FFOA General Assembly three or four years ago. He noted that he had recently returned from New York where he had been based for the last two years. He acknowledged the wealth of experience existing within the community of retired staff, and how important it was for all of the RBAs. Mr Abdulla noted that the World Food Programme (WFP) greatly valued this experience and remained in close contact with the WFP Alumni Group and drew on this group to be hired as consultants on a Pro Bono or short-term basis. He noted that experience, expertise and institutional memory inherent in the FFOA were highly beneficial in guiding the work of the younger generation of staff as a source of wisdom and knowledge. WFP was always happy to welcome back not only retired staff for their impact, wisdom and knowledge but also to welcome old friends as part of the large WFP family.

Mr Abdulla underlined the importance of health and expressed concern about the Medical Insurance Plan. He noted that the Staff Medical Insurance Plan represented one of the most successful areas of RBAs' collaboration. WFP attached great importance to staff wellbeing both at Headquarters and in the field. He referred to the establishment of a Wellness Division Headquarters at WFP. This Wellness Division and a Wellness Strategy with a strong focus on field staff could also be extended to potential retirees. He noted that the Wellness Division was under the leadership of Dr Sergio Arena and dedicated medical insurance officers. Mr Abdulla noted that WFP Staff was under an inordinate stress, and WFP attached great importance to the wellness of current staff, protecting their current and potential conditions, which would not be possible without adequate medical coverage. With the aging process, health requirements also increased, and it was important to ensure that those needs were adequately catered for.

Mr Abdulla noted that over time needs had changed based on demographics, field locations, type of contract but also advances in medicine and medical technology. He indicated that in WFP, approximately 800-1000 consultants and short-term staff could not benefit from medical insurance coverage. It was important to include them as much as regular staff for matters such as sick leave, maternity, pre- and post- natal care. It was important to see what could be done to improve current plans and the FFOA's feedback was of crucial importance to identify changes and improvements needed in the current policy and plans. He noted that it was not yet officially confirmed whether the current contract with Allianz could be extended or not. The process was ongoing, and the FFOA would be officially informed of the outcome, whether the contract was extended with provisions and amendments or not.

Mr Abdulla acknowledged that the JAC/MC was the appropriate forum for the discussion of these issues. He noted that unfortunately the Committee had not met as frequently as required. Its Terms of Reference were being reviewed and revised, and it was expected that the Committee would be revamped soon. He indicated his intention to actively engage in the discussions regarding the JAC/MC and his personal undertaking to commit together with the Wellness Division, to follow up to get the JAC/MC reactivated again. In the meantime, he reiterated the importance of receiving views and feedback from the FFOA for its services and current activities and wished the Association best in its future endeavours.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Abdulla for his encouraging remarks and support to the FFOA.

The Presiding Officer invited the President of the FFOA to take the floor. Mr Prien thanked Ms Kamila Guseynova and her staff in Social Security of FAO for the excellent assistance offered to the FFOA. He regretted to point out that relations with FAO Senior Management were deplorable. As a case in point, the JAC/MC had not met for 15 months despite repeated written and verbal reminders, which had received no response to date. Mr Prien appreciated the WFP Representative's call for feedback. However, if FAO did not allow meetings of the JAC/MC or participation by the SRBs and FFOA, how could these entities engage in any discussions for instance on matters such as Premium increases. Those receiving smaller pensions needed to be aware of measures regarding health insurance coverage on 1 January 2018, since the contract with Allianz expires at the end of December 2017. It was therefore imperative to have the JAC/MC reconvene as soon as possible with FFOA's involvement, considering also that retirees are participants in the Plan.

Senior FFOA members such as Mr Giorgio Eberle and Mr Marco Breschi with long-standing expertise in insurance matters were assets that the Organization needed to take advantage of in taking policy discussions on insurance plans for medical coverage.

Mr Abdulla thanked Mr Prien for the information provided and noted that he would convey these issues to an imminent meeting of the RBA Senior Management and make every effort to move matters forward.

The Presiding Officer expressed appreciation at the value WFP attached to the wealth of experience and expertise among the retirees. He noted that the President of the FFOA had raised some very important issues. On behalf of the General Assembly, the Presiding Officer congratulated the new Executive Director of WFP, Mr David Beasley, and wished him all success in his new mandate.

## **9. Provisional Report of the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (FFOA/GA/2017/03)**

The Presiding Officer invited the President of the Executive Committee to present the Report. After the presentation, the Presiding Officer opened the floor for discussion. As there were no comments, the Presiding Officer proposed the motion to adopt the Report. The Provisional Report of the 46<sup>th</sup> Session was adopted.

## **10. Pension Matters**

The Presiding Officer welcomed Mr Sergio Arvizú, CEO of the UNJSPF, as well as Mr Paul Dooley, Deputy, CEO and Mr Alan Blythe, Head of the Geneva UNJSPF Office. Mr Arvizú provided an overview of the Fund, reaffirming its good financial health. He noted that pension funds are inherently risky and that a large number of such funds had been forced to close due to poor management. He noted that the UNJSPF had come a long way since 2005 and pointed out major concerns in relation to the Fund, notably: concern for solvency; (ii) IT Platform and infrastructure; (iii) scarce financial and human resources; and (iv) long-term sustainability.

Mr Arvizú noted that in the period 1999-2011, demands had grown and resources had been shrinking. To address these problems, a working group of the Pension Board has confirmed the need for reforms and adjustments to current working methods and proposed a series of measures to the Pension Board and the General Assembly. He



also noted that the key drivers of solvency were in returns on investment. The strong growth in number of active participants implied more volume, and therefore more operational demand. He noted that returns had increased three and a half times since the 1980s. A new robust IT platform had been fully integrated which was the single most important and urgently required change. The transition to the new IT Platform had been seamless for those already receiving pension payments but caused some delays for those entering the Pension Payments scheme.

The processing time for new entrants had been considerably reduced and was now between 2-4 weeks for the new beneficiaries. The speed with which the payments were made also depended on how quickly information was received from the separating agency.

Mr Arvizú referred to the revamped website which had currently more than 70,000 registered users. It contained a Dashboard for separating Staff who could monitor the status of their individual case. It was envisaged to establish a Call Centre in New York (a pilot office in Nairobi had already been established), and to expand similar outreach facilities to other regions. Mr Arvizú stated that the new website represented a tremendous improvement on the previous one. He informed that the Pension Board and the General Assembly had supported this agile process, in particular the Dashboard, the Call Centre and the Website, which would all be further improved and expanded in the near future. Mr Arvizú underlined that they were doing more with less.

The CEO informed that the Fund had been awarded two prizes: the J.P. Morgan Elite Quality Award for Operational Efficiency in 2015 and 2016.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Arvizú for the informative presentation and opened the floor for questions.

The President of the FFOA Executive Committee asked about the electronic transmission of the Pension Fund Newsletters, indicating that approximately one-



third of the membership did not have access to Internet/Emails. Essentially, how do we reach that portion of the population which does not have access to web-based tools?

Mr Arvizú responded that while registered members were receiving the Newsletter, they were not reaching the entire membership. He noted that the constituents were aging fast, with a longer life span. He noted that an increasing number were reaching 90 years and beyond. While the number of aging staff increased, resources available to the UNJSPF had not increased to cater for such requirements.

While progress made in reducing the delays in processing time for pension benefits was appreciated, concern was expressed that there continued to be significant delays in the processing time for survivor benefits. The FFOA had some cases where the processing time had been up to six months for the surviving beneficiary and should in principle be same as for the primary beneficiary.

Mr Arvizú acknowledged that the processing time for surviving spouses could take longer although most of the outstanding cases had been addressed. The delays were usually due to the need for rigorous and granular analysis on establishing eligibility, and who was entitled to survivor benefits, and also when dealing with people in the field. The CEO invited the FFOA to flag any outstanding cases to the Geneva Office and assured that these would be dealt with on a priority basis. He added that often the surviving spouse may not know how to deal with the situation, and HR and Payroll had to transmit the necessary information to UNJSPF before any action could be taken.

Another question was raised on whether the Certificate of Entitlements (CEs) had been sent as none had been received as yet. Mr Arvizú replied that the cycle of transmission had changed from November to May, and the CEs were sent through normal mail. As there were problems with national mails, consideration was being given by Social Security to new solutions such as the electronic version of the CEs, which could be printed and signed. Innovative approaches such voice recognition, which was as distinct as fingerprints, were also a possibility.

Ms Linda Orebi (IFAD) referred to the surviving spouse issue and requested that information could be sent to the Secretaries, and if FFOA had a list, this could be sent to IFAD to examine the individual cases.

Some concern was expressed on the governance of the Pension Fund with some allegations of it becoming detached from the UN system. It was recalled that the assets of the Pension Fund belong to the beneficiaries and participants and, as stakeholders, they needed to be involved in decision-making on the investment of the funds.

Mr Arvizú confirmed that there was no intention to separate the Fund from the UN system. The Fund was one of the most complex entities to manage, and it was governed by a rigorous management system, composing of the Pension Board, being the Administrator, the Audit Committee, the Asset Liability Management Committee (ALM) and several advisory committees including the Investment and Actuarial Committees, which were very robust management committees.

On the question of scarce staff resources available to the Fund to cope with the increasing demands to service its clients, a suggestion was made to consider the use of Interns. The Head of the Geneva Office, Mr Blythe, noted that two Interns were working in the Geneva Office.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Arvizú for the additional information provided and requested him to provide a copy of his PowerPoint presentation to the President of the Executive Committee. (In the meantime, this presentation has been posted on the FFOA website).

## **11. Health Insurance**

Mr Tesfamariam requested the Allianz Representative, Ms Anissa Maaref-Wilson, Client Relationship Manager, to make a presentation and answer questions from the floor.

Ms Maaref-Wilson informed that the current medical insurance contract was due to expire on 31 December 2017. She noted that the statement of the Representative of the Staff Bodies of FAO, WFP and IFAD was very insightful on the challenges being faced today and the current socio-economic environment. Ms Maaref-Wilson appreciated the emphasis on the necessity to meet the needs of the younger staff, and especially those on temporary or short-term-contracts (consultants, interns, etc.). She indicated that delays in the processing time for reimbursement of claims had been considerably reduced, also due to the introduction of the Mobile APP “My Health” which had resulted in 80 percent of the claims being paid in 48 hours. Ms Maaref-Wilson noted the similarities with the UNJSPF in having to do more with fewer resources and to meet growing demands, including an ageing population. She requested feedback on possible improvements in the Services, which Allianz could offer within the limits of the contract, and in line with international norms of safety. She noted that Allianz operated under the principle of “Duty of Care” with the purpose of best serving its clientele. The goal was not to reduce benefits but to be competitive and secure sufficient funds in their budget to be able to meet the claims.

Ms Maaref-Wilson urged that the right channels be used for members to escalate their issues. She also reassured the meeting of the Allianz Representatives presence after the meeting to reply to individual questions and concerns.

A question was raised regarding natural medicine, which were prescribed by doctors and whose costs were often much lower than that of pharmaceutical products but which were not reimbursed under the current contract. Current market trends and progress in medical science recognized the value of supplements, especially as preventive medicine.

The Allianz representative agreed with the points raised concerning homeopathic, alternative medicine, including supplements and their positive impact on health but confirmed that these were not covered under the current contract.

Another question was raised in regard to the transfer to unspent balances, for instance, for eyeglasses, dental care, physiotherapy, to other requirements which were not fully reimbursed. The Allianz Representative confirmed that such transfer of unspent funds was not envisaged under the terms and conditions of the current contract.

Reference was made to the presence of Allianz Representative at the monthly FFOA Coffee morning where members expressed their concerns and exchanged ideas and opinions, and made proposals on improvements to the current service. However, regrettably these did not seem to be passed on to the responsible managers. Such a situation reconfirmed the pressing need for the JAC/MC to reconvene as soon as possible. A request was made for an evaluation form to be sent on assessing the quality of the medical services received whether these were prompt, efficient and humane. In regard to the electronic submission of claims, it was requested that a

blank Section for Remarks be incorporated in the form. A request was made for any unspent balances to be shown in a statement of accounts, which should be sent to all clients.

Ms Maaref-Wilson took note of the comments and thanked members for the very useful feedback. She confirmed the current electronic format of the claims reimbursement forms could not be modified to include some of the information requested but this could be transmitted via the Mobile App. In regard to multiple claims, a request was made to have information separately, indicating which claims were reimbursed and which ones were rejected as in the current format it was not possible to trace such information.

The Presiding Officer thanked the Allianz representatives for their participation and the information provided.

## **12. Report of the Executive Committee (FFOA/GA/2017/04)**

The Presiding Officer asked the President of the Executive Committee to update the Statement of Work achieved during 2016, and to provide a brief account of major developments between 1 January 2017 and the present.

As there were no comments from the floor, the Presiding Officer proposed the adoption of the Report of the FFOA Executive Committee.

The General Assembly congratulated the Executive Committee and approved the report with the adoption of Resolution “B” of document FFOA/GA/2017/06.

## **13. Reports of the Association’s Financial Transactions (FFOA/GA/2017/05)**

The Presiding Officer requested the Treasurer, Mr Gianni Monciotti, to present the Financial Reports for 2016, and the proposed budget for 2018.

Mr Monciotti underlined that the accounts of the FFOA had been certified, although with a slight delay, and he thanked the Reviewers Messrs John McGhie and David Baugh.

Referring to the financial report showing a deficit of € 3,429.00, Mr Monciotti explained that this was due to the new presentation of the report; in fact, the amount available in the transfer account at the end of 2016 can not be considered - according to the Reviewers - as real income, and it should be listed among the assets in the Financial Status. Furthermore, if one takes into account the high mail expenses for the Newsbrief during 2015 but debited by FAO only during 2016, “the picture becomes complete”.

The Financial Status, on the contrary, presents a positive balance that, even after the statutory transfer to the Reserves, stands at a plus €34,825.00., the reason being the redemption of an investment, which was for too long negative; the other still on-investment has a market value higher than the nominal value of €6,500.00.

Mr Monciotti noted that the provisional budget for 2018 did not present significant changes compared to that of 2017, except for the reintroduction of the item “Legal Assistance” amounting to €5,000.00.

Finally, the Treasurer proposed the reconfirmation of Messrs John McGhie and David Baugh as Reviewers of the accounts for 2017.

The Assembly unanimously approved the financial reports and the proposed Reviewers for 2017 along with the adoption *en bloc* of resolutions A through F.

#### **14. Other Business**

As no further proposals for other business were received from the members, Mr Tesfamariam handed the Meeting over to the President of the FFOA. Mr Prien reminded the Audience to update their Email addresses so that the FFOA could use electronic communications contributing to cut costs. He also informed that there was an updated *Before and After* publication to keep members informed and that survivors knew what they have to do to receive benefits. This document is available on the FFOA website or could be requested in hard copy from the FFOA Desk Assistants.

He reminded participants that they could contribute to the Old Folks Home near FAO. (Mrs Prien collected a total of 460 euros.) Mr Prien thanked Mr Tesfamariam for chairing the Assembly, and all others who helped to prepare and to carry out a successful meeting.

Mr Prien reminded members of the informal information session that afternoon on fiscal issues.

A moment of silence honoured serving and retired UN Staff who had passed away during the year, and in particular Ms Paula Kelly, a former FFOA member from IFAD.

#### **15. Closure of the Forty-seventh Session of the General Assembly by the President of the Executive Committee**

The President of the FFOA, Mr Prien, closed the Assembly at 13:15 hours.

**The Forty-eight Session of the General Assembly**  
will take place on  
**Wednesday, 30 May 2018 at FAO Headquarters**  
**starting at 9:30 hours**

So plan ahead, mark it in your calendar,  
and please come along and bring this report with you.